

Josh McDowell: People Need More Than Jesus

Apologist and legendary Christian author Josh McDowell decided against giving a speech at Liberty University's convocation on Wednesday, instead opting to share his own story, which included tales of a traumatic childhood and of coming to know Christ as a college student on the search for truth.

McDowell is the author of 140 books and has spoken to more than 25 million people in 125 different countries. He last spoke at Liberty in 2010. On Wednesday, he said he was impressed with the rapid growth on campus.

"I am a big fan of Liberty and of the vision of President Jerry Falwell, Jr. His vision for this campus with the different facilities, such as the law school, the medical school, and the new library, is going to make this school one of the greatest forces for Christ in the world," he said.

McDowell began his story by asking students if they had ever felt lonely. He proceeded to share about growing up with an abusive, alcoholic father and suffering from sexual abuse as a child—one of the loneliest times in his life. He said he shut the door on God and "stuffed the bitterness down in my heart."

When he attended college, he was intrigued by a group of students and professors who boldly proclaimed Jesus Christ. He set out to disprove their faith, traveling to Europe and the Middle East to gather evidence.

But the truth in God's Word revealed itself, and he eventually knew he wanted what the students and professors had.

"I concluded as an angry university student I could hold the New Testament in my hand and say what I had in this book had not been changed, and I concluded that what was written down

was true," he said.

His findings were documented in his best-known book, *The Evidence that Demands a Verdict*.

He said that after he accepted Christ, the change was not immediate, but six months later his "entire life turned upside down." He said he was able to forgive his father and lead him to Christ, and he also forgave the man who sexually abused him.

The power of forgiveness, he said, is what allowed him to be blessed with "a happy marriage and a happy family" (he and his wife, Dottie, have four children and eight grandchildren)—something that, based on his upbringing, he never knew existed.

He told students not to go another day "without the joy God intended."

"My joy in life is not because I have not had any problems," he said. "I have joy because I have learned there is nothing too great for God's power to deal with, nor anything too small or insignificant for His love to be concerned about."

In his faith journey, McDowell said one of the wisest things he has learned is that people need "more than Jesus." Though at first many may find this thought concerning, he explained that people also need each other.

"When it comes to my salvation, all I need is Jesus; after my salvation, everything is Jesus plus the church. ... When people preach that all you need is Jesus, they cut you and I off from one of the greatest sources of healing, which is the body of Christ," McDowell said. "Don't go it alone—you won't make it."

After the convocation, McDowell met with students and signed copies of his books. McDowell was also the featured speaker at Campus Church Wednesday night.